

The Brooklyn Paper

Including Carroll Gardens-Cobble Hill Paper, Downtown News, DUMBO Paper and Fort Greene-Clinton Hill Paper

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EXCLUSIVE BRUCE RATNER TELLS BUILDING TRADES GROUP:

PATAKI, MTA BACK ARENA

By Deborah Kolben
and Neil Sloane
The Brooklyn Papers

Speaking at a building trades conference in Manhattan Thursday, developer Bruce Ratner thanked the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and Gov. George Pataki for backing his \$2.5 billion Atlantic Yards project.

"The government has been wonderful — the mayor, the governor, city and state officials, the MTA has been wonderful — in supporting both projects," Ratner said, referring to both his plan to build an arena for the New Jersey Nets near the junction of Flatbush and Atlantic avenues, and a separate plan to build a football stadium for the New York Jets on Manhattan's west side.

Ratner's statement marks the second time in just over a week that either Ratner or a spokesman have claimed to have the support of the governor and the MTA — whose 20-member board Pataki appoints — for the developer's Atlantic Yards plan, where towers would reach upwards of 60 stories on derelict mega-blocks.

The support of the MTA, which controls the Long Island Rail Road yards over which a large portion of the project would be built, is crucial, as is that of Pataki, whose Empire State Development Corp. would be needed to condemn 10 acres of private property in

See **PATAKI** on page 5

Lawyer Francis Hsueh on Duffield Street near Fulton Street where he is involved in organizing Chinese and Korean merchants to protect themselves in the face of Downtown Brooklyn Plan evictions.

Asian bizmen told: Know your rights

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

On a sunny Thursday afternoon, Mike Kim is sitting at the front table of Duffield Street Seafood, reading a Bible and greeting long-time customers, who flock to his shop just off Fulton Mall for plates of hot fish and chips.

With the sound of crackling oil in the background, and the smell of tartar sauce thick in the air, Kim explains to a visiting attorney that he's had his business in the area for more than 17 years.

Kim is one of many Asian-American merchants in Downtown Brooklyn

NOT JUST NETS THE NEW BROOKLYN

to whom a pair of Manhattan attorneys are offering legal assistance.

With a massive rezoning plan — which would court soaring new office and residential towers in a 60-block swath of downtown — currently under city review, many local businesses fear they will be priced out or their properties condemned to make way for future development.

Francis Hsueh, an attorney in his early 30s who recently left a corporate

See **MERCHANTS** on page 5

Illegal tows in Heights



A police tow truck with its fresh-caught quarry at Clinton and Joralemon streets in the Heights Tuesday.

EXCLUSIVE DOT: Police towers don't know rules

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

The police department is towing legally parked cars in Brooklyn Heights because enforcement agents don't know they are not supposed to, The Brooklyn Papers has learned.

That's because of a confusing system of signage unique to the area that prevents parking on one side of certain streets from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., one day a week, while allowing parking on the other side during those hours. On other streets, and along certain stretches of the same street, parking is barred for only 90 minutes, once a week.

At the crux of the confusion is that the 90-minute signs bear a large black letter "P" inside a red circle with a red broomstick slashed through the letter, indicating that there is no parking allowed there during those hours for street cleaning. The "NO Parking 8 a.m. to 6 p.m." signs have no such emblem.

The 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. alternate side parking rules are not considered

See **TOWING** on page 6

Cheap eats week

Boro's first restaurant week kicks off April 15

By Jotham Sederstrom
The Brooklyn Papers

Goodbye Elaine's, hello Marco Polo.

In an announcement sure to have Manhattanites reaching for their subway maps, Borough President Marty Markowitz unveiled "Dine In Brooklyn," his answer to the city's semiannual restaurant week.

During the week of April 15-22, diners will have a chance to nosh on three-course, prix fixe meals from 93 restaurants in 20 Brooklyn neighborhoods. Aside from 38 Zagat-rated eateries, including Planet Thailand in Williamsburg and Patios on Smith Street, the list extends to classics like Tatiana in Brighton Beach and one of Markowitz's favorites, Junior's.

"Trust me," said Markowitz,

well-known as a devotee of the borough's culinary delights, "when any of these restaurants see me coming in they have a smile on their face — and that's not because I'm the borough president, if you know what I mean."

Markowitz boasted that the \$18.98 price, inspired by the year Brooklyn joined New York City, is \$11 cheaper than what's demanded for dinners during Manhattan's restaurant weeks (lunches went for \$20.04 this year). The price is the same for either lunch or dinner, at restaurants offering the special on both menus.

"Manhattanites and many others have been crossing their own bridge and ours for years," said Markowitz, "but the truth is, they've been coming to

See **CHEAP** on page 14

Lisa and Nicole Bamonte, from Bamonte's in Williamsburg, display a signature dish at Borough Hall Thursday.



Erin Go Brooklyn

The Brooklyn Papers

Brooklyn will continue to celebrate both St. Patrick and Irish culture in big ways this Sunday and the next with parades in Park Slope and Bay Ridge.

The 29th annual Brooklyn Irish American Parade will step off Sunday, March 21, at 1 p.m. from 15th Street and Prospect Park West in Park Slope.

The Park Slope parade will proceed along 15th Street to Seventh Avenue, then up the avenue to Union Street, across Union Street to Prospect Park West and then back to 15th Street.

Then, on Sunday, March 28, the 11th annual Bay Ridge parade starts at 1 p.m. in front of St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church at 95th Street and Fourth Avenue. A 9:30 a.m. Mass at St. Patrick's will precede the parade.

The theme of the Bay Ridge event is "Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity." Its grand marshal will be Sister Ann Clancy, principal of Fontbonne Academy.

The parade will proceed to Fifth Avenue and then north to 59th Street in Sunset Park where it will disperse at Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The grandstand will be at Fifth Avenue and 75th Street.

GO
BEGINS ON
PAGE 7

Judicial selection process challenged

Associated Press

A New York University watchdog group asked a federal court Thursday to change the way the state selects judges, arguing the current system gives too much power to county political bosses.

Under current rules, Democratic and Republican leaders handpick candidates for Supreme Court justice posts at nominating conventions before the public votes on

them in general elections.

The Brennan Center for Justice at NYU wants the system changed to direct primaries, where voters themselves would get the chance to pick each party's candidates.

The center filed a lawsuit in Brooklyn federal court against the state Board of Elections. The center asked a judge to declare the current system unconstitutional and give the Legislature 90 days to replace it.

"The current selection system

robs voters of their constitutional right to choose their Supreme Court justices, and destroys their faith in the judiciary," Brennan Center lawyer Jeremy Creelan said.

The elections board did not immediately return a call for comment.

The lawsuit took aim at what the plaintiffs said is a complicated set of obstacles set up to make sure party leaders choose which delegates go

District Attorney Charles Hynes, who has been investigating judicial corruption, commended the Brennan Center for "challenging a process where party leadership determines who becomes a Supreme Court Justice through an 'election' that is a sham."

Hynes launched his investigation of the Supreme Court judiciary after the arrest of Supreme Court Justice Genald Garson last April. Garson was the

See **CHALLENGE** on page 6

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The New York Times March 17, 2004
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The 'Art' of canal cleaning

Push anew to name Gowanus tunnel for 'Honeymooners' Carney

By Jotham Soderstrom
The Brooklyn Papers

He was the beloved sewer worker to Jackie Gleason's bus-driving Ralph Kramden on TV's "The Honeymooners," the classic 1950s sitcom that celebrated working-class Brooklynites in their natural habitat. Whenever Kramden went, Art Carney's Ed Norton dutifully followed, with impeccable comic timing.

But 15 years after a bus depot in Sunset Park honored Gleason for his fictional contribution to mass transit, a similar proposal to name the Gowanus Canal Pumping Station after his sludge-sifting upstairs neighbor continues to stall.

Robert Adamski, a retired sewer worker, told The Brooklyn Papers this week that the initiative, clogged since Carney declined the offerous honor in 1989, resurfaced after the Emmy- and Oscar-winning actor died last November. Adamski and members of several sewage-related organizations said they plan to resubmit proposals for the tribute, which would need the approval of the City Council and mayor.

"There's a renewed effort," said Adamski. "But because of the [Carney] family's concern with naming him after something with sewage in the title, they're looking for something else to name."

The pumping station, located on Butler Street near the industrially polluted waterway, became operational five years ago after more than 30 years of planning. It pumps clean water into the polluted canal from the Upper New York Bay.

Adamski said that at least two sewage-related organizations in New York have suggested making Carney an honorary member, including the intriguingly named Select Society of Sanitary Sludge Shovelers and the Gowanus Manhattan Society, which hopes to vote on the proposal this summer.

Gleason, on the other hand, is already an honorary member of the city's Transport Workers Union.

"I think whatever we name,



Art Carney as Ed Norton on 'The Honeymooners.'

we just want to remember the honor of the sewage workers, who never get remembered," Adamski said.

But the late actor's family, including Carney's son, Brian, 56, have said they are wary of connecting the name of the great comic actor—who originated the role of Felix Unger in the original Broadway version of "The Odd Couple"—to

sewers or waste treatment. Elected officials and a spokesman for the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), which would oversee such a tribute, said they will honor the family's wishes.

"We are working with the Carney family, but we want to do something that's appropriate and that they would approve of," said Natalie Milner, a DEP spokeswoman. "But no decision has been made yet."

Carney's journey toward immortality began shortly after Gleason's name was attached to the Sunset Park bus depot on Fifth Avenue between 36th and 39th streets in 1988. Metropolitan Transportation Authority officials languid at the opportunity, and media publicity, to honor Gleason, who was born in Bushwick and acted in more than 30 films, including his memorable role as Minnesota Fats in "The Hustler." The Gleason family predictably objected.

A statue of Gleason in his

Ralph Kramden bus driver's uniform stands near the Port Authority Bus Terminal on the corner of 40th Street and Eighth Avenue in Manhattan.

The recognition sparked the imagination of Adamski, a Bay Ridge resident, who promptly sent a letter to the DEP's Bureau of Wastewater Treatment. Arguing that the city's sewer workers were unappreciated, Adamski called for a brisk decision to coincide with the upcoming completion of the pumping station's reconstruction.

A year later, then-Borough President Howard Golden appealed to DEP Commissioner Harvey Schultz, who eventually agreed on the Carney tribute. But it was stymied by Carney himself, apparently flummoxed by the peculiar citation that would further link him to the city's soggy sewer regions.

Since Carney's death, other "Honeymooners"-inspired tributes have been planted across Brooklyn, thanks to Marty

Markowitz, the current borough president and a fan of the show. Markowitz had signs installed last year co-opting Gleason's famous tagline to read, "Brooklyn: How sweet it is," to welcome visitors coming from Staten Island.

In this case, however, Markowitz, who has no authority to grant street or facility namings,

said he would defer to the Carney family's wishes when it came to his recommendation. "If in life Art Carney did not want the [pumping station] named after him then in his death I would have to respect the wishes of his family and his memory. And I have not spoken with his family," Markowitz said through a spokeswoman.

Sue EPA over 9-11 air

Associated Press

Residents and workers in Brooklyn and Lower Manhattan is suing the Environmental Protection Agency, saying the agency improperly let thousands of people return to their homes and businesses after the World Trade Center collapsed.

The lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Manhattan last Wednesday, accused the EPA of repeatedly making misleading and unduly reassuring statements about air quality after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack. It sought class action status.

The suit charges that the agency failed to follow its own procedures, letting people flood back into Lower Manhattan and parts of Brooklyn in the direct path of the airborne debris before adequate precautions were taken to protect them from asbestos and other toxins released in the disaster.

Two years ago, NASA released a space station photograph taken on Sept. 11, 2001, that showed the dust and smoke plume from Ground Zero spreading across the East River, engulfing most of Brooklyn Heights and Downtown Brooklyn, and then proceeding south by southeast over Cobble Hill and Carroll Gardens, Park Slope, Prospect Park, Kensington, Midwood and then down over Sheepshead Bay and Brighton Beach.

The lawsuit filed last week said the EPA's actions "left many thousands of individuals, adults and children alike, unnecessarily exposed to potentially hazardous levels of asbestos and possibly other carcinogens and toxic substances."

It accused the agency and its leaders, including former EPA Administrator Christine Todd Whitman, of "a shockingly deliberate indifference to human health."

As a result, residents and

workers in the area face potentially serious long-term health effects and the prospect of having to pay to properly clean their residences, the lawsuit said.

The lawsuit sought unspecified damages, including reimbursement for the cleanup of residences, schools and businesses.

It also asked the court to order the creation of a fund to finance medical monitoring services, including testing and preventive screening for conditions resulting from exposure to toxic dust.

In a statement, the EPA said it had not seen the lawsuit and could not comment directly on it. But it defended what it described as its staff's "remarkable feat" after the terrorist attack.

Within minutes of the attack, the agency said, it began monitoring and sampling air, dust and river and drinking water.

The agency also said it tested thousands of homes in lower Manhattan.

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Transition from pre-k to kindergarten

Q: My 5-year-old son is in full-day pre-kindergarten, and his school's director has concerns about him moving to kindergarten.

A: A mother's concerns about your child aren't meant to be put down, nor should they be an end-of-the-year surprise.

"The transition to kindergarten is so important," says Amy Wilkins, executive director of The Trust for Early Education. "It's serious business dealing with these young brains."

Unfortunately, she says, there is no public policy that will snap into place to smooth the transition — so the job is up to parents and teachers.

The decision about whether to retain a pre-K child should be based on specific observations that well-trained teachers and parents share back and forth throughout the year, Wilkins says. Both sides also need to know what will be expected of the child in kindergarten.

Parents wrestle with a tough question: Is my child going to be bored with another year of pre-K, or struggle in kindergarten because he can't sit still or control his impulses?

Visit the school your youngster will attend, several parents suggest, and talk to friends whose kids have attended the kindergarten. Are the teachers responsive to individual learning styles? Is there a variety of materials for hands-on activities?

Research on how children learn shows that one of the best ways to improve math and reading scores is to teach children before they enter kindergarten, says Wilkins.

A national survey of public kindergarten teachers noted three primary essentials for school readiness: children are physically healthy, rested and well-nourished; children are able to communicate needs, wants and thoughts verbally; and children are enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities.

In the wide span of what's normal, it's typical for 4- and 5-year-olds to race ahead in some areas of social, emotional, physical and cognitive development but to lag in others — then catch up. What if your child isn't ready to move on?

"Don't think of it as holding the child back. You're giving the child the gift of another year of social and emotional development," says Kristen Clark, a preschool director. "An extra year gives a child the chance to grow and blossom."

The current, controversial push for academics earlier in school makes it all the more important not to send a child out of the parental and preschool nest too soon, says Clark, a mother of three.

Can you help?

"My 15-month-old daughter

Parent-to-Parent



By Betsy Flieger

is awesome, but I'm afraid she's accustomed to being entertained and loved so much that she expects it and can't play by herself as much as I'd like. How can I teach her to be more independent?" — a mother

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BUILD steps down

President of pro-Ratner group accuses members of seeking 'financial self gain'

By Deborah Kolben

The Brooklyn Papers

The president of the group Brooklyn United for Innovative Development, or BUILD, has stepped down, claiming the group he helped found has veered from its initial goal of securing jobs for the community from developer Bruce Ratner's proposed Atlantic Yards development.

In his resignation, Darnell Canada accused fellow BUILD leaders of seeking "financial self gain" out of the proposal to build a professional basketball arena and housing and office towers in Prospect Heights.

"I am resigning out of the need to distance myself from those in the organization who see this organization as financial self gain, [rather] than for the needs of the Brooklyn community," Canada wrote in a letter circulated to local community groups.

For the past few months, BUILD has been working with Ratner to secure jobs for local residents if the proposed Atlantic Yards plan, including a \$450 million basketball arena to house the New Jersey Nets, gets the go-ahead from the state.

The group is angling for a community benefits agreement is often determining what will benefit and how much benefit a developer will provide.

environmental concerns and other community needs.

Canada, a window installer and longtime Fort Greene activist, said he would continue to fight for jobs for the community.

"My focus is basically jobs. I feel I can better serve my community by just going after jobs," Canada said. "BUILD started going in other directions. I hope they're successful, but I want to focus on jobs."

Eric Blackwell, an urban studies professor at Long Island University and executive director of BUILD, declined to comment on Canada's allegations.

"Projects like this don't solve community problems, they just help to create the kind of atmosphere where people can make money," said Blackwell.

BUILD members have long complained that Metrotech, a major high rise office complex in Downtown Brooklyn, provided few jobs or business opportunities for area residents. The group was formed last year to advocate for jobs in response to massive development in the Downtown Brooklyn area.

James Caldwell, president of the 77th Precinct Community Council, will step in to replace Canada as BUILD's president.

The tricky part about negotiating a community benefits agreement is often determining what will benefit and how much benefit a developer will provide.

"We would like to see jobs for people in the community, but our focus is that whatever happens the community has a big say," said Patti Hagan, a spokeswoman for the Prospect Heights Action Coalition, an anti-arena group.

"Part of a community benefits agreement should be no eminent domain. No one's job, business or home should be eliminated in order to construct something else," Hagan added.

As part of the sweeping, 24-acre Atlantic Yards plan — including soaring office and residential buildings totaling almost 7 million square feet — Ratner says he will need the state to condemn more than two square blocks of private property.

"We will certainly sit down with BUILD and other organizations," said Joe DePasco, a spokesman for Ratner.

"We see this project as more than a basketball arena — but a larger development project that can provide many needed jobs and much-needed housing and we look forward to discussing with BUILD the community and economic benefits of this project."

Canada and Blackwell each said they were not in cahoots with Ratner.

"I am certainly in nobody's pocket," Canada said. "I don't want to get caught up in a battle about what BUILD is doing and what they're not going after. I wish them well."

Queens councilman will hold Nets arena hearing

By Deborah Kolben

The Brooklyn Papers

Amid rumors that developer Bruce Ratner and City Council Speaker Gifford Miller were trying to nip in the bud his plan to hold a hearing on the Atlantic Yards project, a Queens councilman said this week he will not be stopped.

Councilman James Sanders, chairman of the Economic Development Committee, will hold hearings on the plan to build a basketball arena for the New Jersey Nets and office and residential towers in Prospect Heights.

"We need to make sure in our rush to welcome the Nets back, that we are not being irresponsible," said Sanders.

The sweeping, \$2.5 billion office and residential development centered around a

19,000-seat basketball arena at the intersection of Flatbush and Atlantic avenues to house Ratner's recently purchased Nets is expected to be approved by the state.

Ratner unveiled plans for the 21-acre development in December when he announced his intentions to purchase the basketball team.

Ratner is asking the state to use its power of eminent domain to seize more than two square city blocks of private land housing between 400 to 800 people.

He is also asking the state to turn over the air rights over 11 acres of the Long Island Rail Road storage yards, stretching along Atlantic Avenue between Fifth and Vanderbilt avenues.

But Sanders says he wants to see if the plan is a "good financial deal for New York City" and plans to bring in development experts to critique it.

Asked about attempts to thwart the hearings, the councilman and former Marine, who was inundated with dozens of e-mails in support of the hearing this week, said, "I assure you, no one tells me what to do."

"I've seen all kinds of statements that the speaker is pressuring us. That just hasn't happened. I've received no calls from the speaker or his staff on this issue," Sanders said.

"That's absolutely not true," said Ratner spokesman Barry Baum.

Miller's office did not respond to a request for comment.

The hearing is tentatively scheduled for the end of April. Sanders says he is expecting "solid facts and numbers" from the developers.

"I think it would be an insult to the people of New York City if they come in and say they are still working on this," Sanders said.

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PATAKI AND MTA ON BOARD, RATNER SAYS...

Continued from page 1

order for Ratner to realize his dream.

Last week, The Brooklyn Papers reported exclusively that Ratner, the Pataki-controlled Empire State Development Corp. (ESDC) and the MTA were close to an agreement that would establish the ESDC as the lead governmental agency on the project.

Forest City Ratner spokesman Joe Deplasio confirmed the tripartite agreement, which he said should be signed in upcoming weeks. The details, he said, were "still being worked out."

Ratner made his comments Thursday at a breakfast meeting of the New York Building Congress, a coalition of contractors, engineers and developers, at Club 101 on Park Avenue and 40th Street.

Prospect Heights Councilwoman Letitia James, an ardent opponent of the plan, who attended the breakfast speech, said she didn't know whether Ratner was engaging in "hyperbole" or whether the state "is represented by Mr. [Charles] Gargano was basically engaging in deception."

Gargano heads the Empire State Development Corp.

"All indications from the MTA are they have not made a decision with regards to the Atlantic Yards project," James told The Brooklyn Papers Thursday evening.

"If there are backroom deals, that is a different matter," she added.

"I don't know what he means," MTA spokesman Tom Kelly said Friday when asked about Ratner's comments.

Asked whether the MTA supports Ratner's plan, Kelly said, "Nothing has been done formally and we would take whatever steps are necessary for whoever wants to do anything at the site."

No formal proposal has been submitted to the MTA, he said, adding that it is not on the agenda for the next MTA board meeting, scheduled for March 31.

Gov. Pataki's office did not respond to calls for comments.

Questions about such deals between the MTA and Ratner were first raised last year when an MTA spokesman told The Brooklyn Papers on three separate occasions that Ratner had already purchased the development rights to build over the rail yards. The spokesman later said that information was incorrect and apologized, explaining that he had incorrectly assumed that Ratner held the development rights.

"I did not understand that it was contingent on [Ratner] getting the team first," MTA spokesman Tom



Left to right: Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Gov. George Pataki, Bruce Ratner, Sen. Charles Schumer, New York Mercantile Exchange Chairman Vincent Viola, and Hip-Hop artist and Nets investor Jay-Z, at a Jan. 23 news conference to announce the Ratner investment team's successful bid to buy the New Jersey Nets.

Kelly told The Papers. "I put the cart before the horse. If he gets the Nets and wants to develop that arena he has to come back to us and then we have to go the [MTA] board."

But rather than explain the agency spokesman had simply made a mistake, MTA Executive Director Katherine Lapp chose to try and cover up the gaff by deflecting blame to The Brooklyn Papers.

In a letter to Assemblyman

Richard Brodsky, chairman of the public authority committee, who had asked the MTA for a clarification, Lapp said that The Brooklyn Papers had "incorrectly" reported the story.

"I have to figure out who I believe, Ratner or Gargano," state Sen. Velmanette Montgomery said Thursday. Montgomery recently received letters from both Gargano and Lapp explaining that no decision had been reached on whether to support the Ratner proposal.

Patti Hagan, a member of the Prospect Heights Action Coalition, said Thursday that she was not surprised at Ratner's statements.

"This confirms suspicions that there are dealings going on out of site of the public," Hagan said.

"I think it's a little bit speaking out of school for him to thank them when their position is that they're neutral — they haven't put their stamp on anything," she added.

After the meeting, James also lashed out at Ratner for mischaracterizing the section of Prospect Heights where he plans to build the development.

"He led the industry to believe that this is a blighted area," said James.

The three-square-block area includes two recently converted luxury condominiums and anywhere from 400 to 800 renters and owners. James accused Ratner of "low-balling" the number of residents who would be displaced. Those residents have hired civil liberties attorney Norman Siegel to fight their case.

Both James and Montgomery are asking that the MTA solicit open bids for the development of the rail yards. James is holding a workshop Saturday to solicit alternative plans from the public (see story below).

Asked on Thursday about possibly downscaling the towers, the tallest of which would reach 620 feet high — 100 feet taller than the Williamsburgh Bank building, currently the tallest in Brooklyn — Ratner said, "It's about the architecture, not the height."

Frank Gehry, best known for designing the Guggenheim Bilbao in Spain, is designing the 7.7-million-square-foot Atlantic Yards development.

Ratner still needs to finalize his purchase of the New Jersey Nets and would then need to get the approval of the National Basketball Association to move the team to Brooklyn

MERCHANTS...

Continued from page 1

firm to open a private practice in Chinatown, is trying to educate the roughly 50 Asian American merchants in the area about what could happen to their livelihoods if the Downtown Brooklyn Plan is approved.

The Brooklyn Law School graduate, who has also worked with the Asian American Legal Defense Fund, has been following the plan with a watchful eye.

"It seemed like business was no response from Asian owners," said Hsueh.

"Generally, in Asian countries, people are used to governments being more authoritarian. Whatever comes down from above, that's what we're supposed to do. There isn't this same notion of let's try to get input from the community and then reach consensus," he said.

Part of the challenge is convincing people that there's a way to fight the plan, said Hsueh.

For the downtown effort, the Chinese-American lawyer has teamed up with Austin Kyongwon So, a Korean-American attorney, to reach out to two predominant Asian ethnic groups among business owners in the area. They are offering their services to the merchants for free.

The plan provides for the construction of at least 6.7 million square feet of office space, 1 million square feet of retail, 1,000 units of housing and 2,500 parking spaces.

As part of the complex proposal, the city intends to use the power of eminent domain to condemn seven acres of private property, including 130 residential units and 100 businesses.

Armed with fliers written in Chinese and a stack of newspaper clippings, Hsueh walked in the Fulton Mall area last week distributing information and encouraging business owners to attend the City Planning Commission's public hearing on the plan (in the Kitegord Auditorium at New York City Technical College at 285 Jay St.) at 10 am on Wednesday, March 24.

Last Saturday, So, a corporate attorney and board member of the Korean American League for Civic Action (KALCA) organized a meeting with 15 Korean-American business owners along with local groups who are opposed to the plan.

"Most residents and business owners don't

seem to have been adequately informed," said So, who is also helping to organize an association of merchants in the downtown area.

While KALCA has not taken an official stance on the Downtown Brooklyn Plan, So says they are busy trying to educate owners and encourage them to speak out at the public hearing.

Called for comment on the Asian-American effort, Michael Weiss, executive director of the Metrotech Business Improvement District, which also operates the Fulton Mall Improvement Association, said the city had notified any merchants who would be affected by the plan.

And Michael Burke, executive director of the Downtown Brooklyn Council, the group that helped devise the Downtown Plan, said his organization had reached out to merchants in the area.

"In China, government will do something like condemn a factory, and basically their decision is like a mandate from heaven," said Hsueh. "You can see that in people's' mindsets when government is announcing they are going to do something, a feeling of, 'Oh, of course they can do it.'"

Business owners who face condemnation will be offered assistance in finding "suitable new commercial space in the area," according to Carol Abrams, a spokeswoman for the Department of Housing, Preservation and Development. In addition, she said, they will be provided "moving expenses, dislocation allowances and fixture awards."

If the Downtown Plan is approved, Kim's Duffield Street Seafood may be among the first to go.

Just across the street, the city is planning to build Wolloughby Square, a 1.5-acre open space over an underground parking garage.

The surrounding blocks are designated as development sites for premiere office space.

But Kim, who moved here from Korea 25 years ago, said he does not want to relocate. And neither do his customers.

"This place is like an institution," said Roberto Doanfil, who works at the ASA Institute around the corner and grabs lunch at Duffield Street Seafood almost every day.

Standing outside the shop, Hsueh took a look along Duffield Street and said, "This project would not just affect the landscape, but thousands of lives."

Saturday workshop solicits ideas for Atlantic Yards plan

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

For anyone who has ever walked past the barren Long Island Rail Road storage yards along Atlantic Avenue and thought, "Hey, know what would look great there?" now's your chance to vent those ideas to real-live urban planners who want to listen.

Prospect Heights Councilwoman Letitia James is hosting a workshop on Saturday, March 20, from 10 am to 6 pm, to solicit design alternatives for the 11-acre strip of rail yards stretching between Fifth and Vanderbilt avenues.

The site is where billionaire developer Bruce Ratner wants to construct his Atlantic Yards project, a colossal development including a 19,000-seat professional basketball arena, soaring office towers and 4,500 units of housing that would extend to the blocks south of the rail yards.

Ratner, who is best known for the Metrotech office complex in Downtown Brooklyn, hired architect Frank Gehry to design the 8-million-square-foot development extending from Flatbush and Atlantic avenues east into Prospect Heights.

Not so fast, says James, who is a fervent opponent of Ratner's plan, which would require condemning

more than two square city blocks of privately owned property and displacing hundreds of residents.

James, however, believes the rail yard site should be developed.

"The site needs to be developed, but it needs to be developed consistent with some of the pressing issues in the community," James said.

Marshall Brown, an architect, urban designer and Fort Greene resident is one of the leaders of the workshop, which is expected to draw upwards of 100 attendees.

"One of the first things we want to do is change the public discussion a little bit," said Brown. "Right now, the media is going on about the arena, or

no arena plus all of this other development [Ratner] is proposing."

"What we're looking at — rather than what City of Ratner has proposed — is really looking at the site in particular and thinking about what would be interesting or intelligent ways of developing it," Brown said.

Topics of discussion at the all-day session will include zoning, scale, density, public and private landscapes, community facilities and amenities, commercial spaces, and traffic and parking.

The Atlantic Yards Development Workshop is free and open to the public and will be held at the Hanson Place Central United Methodist Church at 144 Saint Felix St.

Official review of D'town B'klyn Plan continues on Wednesday

By Deborah Kolben
The Brooklyn Papers

As a major Downtown Brooklyn rezoning plan winds its way through the city's land use review process, the community is invited to weigh in at a public hearing this week.

The City Planning Commission is hosting a public hearing on the \$100 million Downtown Brooklyn Plan, which would require the condemnation of seven acres of private property, including 130 residential units and 100 businesses.

The area covered by the Downtown Plan overlaps, but is separate from, the Atlantic Yards site on which developer Bruce Ratner wants to erect, on denuded mega-blocks, a professional basketball arena and high-rise apartment and office buildings.

The Downtown Plan hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, March 24, at 10 am, at the New York City College of Technology's Kitegord Auditorium, at 285 Jay St.

The Downtown Brooklyn Plan would allow for the construction of nearly 7 million square feet of office space, 1 million square feet of retail, 1,000 units of

housing and 2,500 parking spaces.

After lengthy debate, Community Board 2, the first stop on the Uniform Land Use Reform Procedure (ULURP) failed to make a recommendation on the plan before it moved on to Borough President Mary Markowitz.

A majority of board members who voted, however, expressed reservations about the condemnation of private property.

Last week, Markowitz signed off on the proposal but attached a laundry list of conditions ranging from traffic and transportation to preservation concerns.

After the City Planning Commission

vote, the application moves to the City Council for a final vote and, if approved there, goes before Mayor Michael Bloomberg, a staunch supporter of the plan.

The mayor appoints seven members to the 13-member City Planning Commission, including the chair, who is also the director of City Planning, the lead agency on the Downtown Plan application. Each borough president also appoints one member, as does the public advocate appoints one.

For more information on the hearing contact the Department of City Planning at (212) 720-3300.

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TOWING CARS ILLEGALLY...

Continued from page 1

street cleaning rules. But the city Department of Transportation, which makes the parking rules, and the Department of Finance, which collects the fines, recognize both types of alternate side streets as being suspended on religious, state and national holidays and on other days when they are announced as suspended, such as last week's weather emergency days.

Police department tow trucks and traffic officers, however, only recognize No Parking signs bearing the street-cleaning emblem.

So on days when alternate side of the street parking rules are suspended, whether for holidays or snow removal, Heights residents are left with a weighty decision: either leave their cars where they are, since common sense and the law dictate that there is no need to move them; or move the car out of fear that one of the swarm of

police department tow trucks that descend upon the neighborhood on alternate side days will tow them anyway.

One thing is for sure, on any given alternate-side-parking rules-suspended day NYPD tow trucks take to Brooklyn Heights — just a short shot from the Brooklyn Navy Yard tow pound — like sharks to blood in the water.

For example, alternate side parking rules were suspended on Feb. 18 for snow removal. On that Wednesday morning, several cars parked along a short section of Hicks Street, between Middagh and Orange streets, which remained there rather than move to the opposite side of the street, were towed and ticketed, even though the parking rules had been suspended. Three to four NYPD tow trucks were standing ready to tow at the stroke of 8:00 am, according to several residents.

The reason for the feeding frenzy boils down to a lack of communication between the Department of Transportation and the police department, according to a DOT spokesman.

And the cost to residents who listen to radio traffic reports or log onto the city's Web site and are told that alternate side of the street parking is suspended: \$185 for the tow and a \$60 parking ticket.

"There's mass confusion," said Sara Cross, a Henry Street resident who recently received a \$60 ticket and had her car towed when she parked on Henry Street even though alternate side of the street parking had been suspended.

Transportation Department spokesman Tom Cocola told The Papers that even though the 8 am to 6 pm signs do not have the street-cleaning emblem, the alternate side parking rules are also suspended on those streets on holidays and other days when street-cleaning rules are suspended.

He acknowledged that the city's Web site and said DOT was considering adding a rider to the 8 am to 6 pm sign or changing the back of the street signs would not follow the street cleaning suspension rules.

Asked about the towed cars on snow days, Cocola said it could be a problem with enforcement.

A tow spokesman for the police department said officers and tow truck drivers just enforce the signs.

"We go according to what the signs say, we just enforce the signs," said the spokesman, Det. Joseph Cavaliro.

"Nobody knows what to do," said Cross, who has reached out to both the Department of Transportation and the police department to find out why she was towed.

When she asked local police officers, she said even they could not know whether she could park there.

To make matters worse, 311, the city's information hotline, may also be dispensing incorrect information.

Contacted this week, a 311

operator said that the "No Parking 8 am to 6 pm" rules were not suspended even though the city had declared a snow day.

Adding to the confusion is that signs on the other side of the street read "No Parking 8 am to 6 pm" streets read "Parking Permitted 8 am to 6 pm" on the alternate side of the street, and are listed in the parking rules, posted on the agency Web site.

According to Cocola, on days when alternate side parking is suspended, parking is permitted on both sides of the street leading to another problem.

Judy Stanton, executive director of the Brooklyn Heights Association, said that because the streets in the Heights are so narrow, there is a concern that trucks and emergency vehicles will not be able to get through.

"I don't want to be in an ambulance on one of these days," she said.

The rules changed in the mid-1990s, but the community was not widely notified, said Stanton. Before that, the 8 am to 6 pm streets did not follow the street cleaning suspension rules.

Kathy Marshall got a \$60 ticket on Feb. 3 for leaving her car in the "No Parking from 8 am to 6 pm" zone on Carleton Street. But when her husband, Brian McGorry, researched the regulation, he found the ticket was unlawful.

"When people can't understand the signs and are getting ticketed, there's a problem," McGorry said.

After a half-hour of research and two hours in traffic court McGorry got the ticket dismissed.

Cross also had her \$60 ticket and \$185 towing fee dismissed when she presented the judge with a printout from the Department of Finance outlining the regulation.

Posted signs restricting parking for a period of six or more consecutive hours on one day per week or on alternate days are also suspended during parking rules. However, such restrictions are suspended on the days that street cleaning rules are suspended, the regulation reads.

And residents who have been towed might want to remember to bring along a printout of the parking regulations from the Department of Finance Web site (<http://home.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/arknyc.htm>) as not all administrative judges that handle parking ticket adjudication are aware that the 8 am to 6 pm streets are also considered suspended on those days.

One woman who lives on Hicks Street and who said she was towed on Feb. 18, spoke to The Papers on the condition of anonymity. She went before a judge to fight the ticket this week, and the judge said that 8 am to 6 pm streets are not suspended on street-cleaning suspension days. Told by the woman that a DOT official had said the suspension rules applied to the 8 am to 6 pm streets, too, the judge said the agency was mistaken.

Fortunately for the woman,

on primary battles because they are unopposed.

Last August, the county district leaders passed a set of reforms that replaced the judicial screening committee — previously appointed by Norman and packed with long-time party allies and Norman cronies — with an 18-member panel made up of delegates from academic institutions, ethnic bar associations and legal services providers.

The results of the new panel, deeming candidates for state Supreme Court "qualified" or "not qualified" to run on the Democratic Party line, are to be made public.

Norman will still have two appointments to the panel but will wield less influence over the process than he had before. The new system took effect in October.

—with The Brooklyn Papers

her license plate number was entered incorrectly on the summons and the judge dismissed it and refunded her tow fees.

In response to a Brooklyn Papers query, a spokesman for Brooklyn Heights Councilman David Yassky said Yassky is looking to clear up the problem.

"It's unnecessarily confusing and we're trying to figure out a way to fix this," said Yassky spokesman Evan Thies.

"There's different agencies telling people different things and they shouldn't be punished for not understanding what is an extremely convoluted law," Thies said.

While McGorry and Cross both got their tickets dismissed in court, not everyone does. "Some people don't have time to fight the ticket," said Cross. "It's not fair that they ticket rampantly and some people are too busy to look up the rules and figure it out."

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The Brooklyn Papers' essential guide to the Borough of Kings

March 20, 2004

Heat wave

Brooklynites are discovering the benefits of very hot yoga

By Chiara V. Cowan
for The Brooklyn Papers

Despite chilly, gusting winds outside, the temperature is rising inside of Hot Yoga People, in Fort Greene. In fact, it is rising in yoga studios throughout Brooklyn.

At HYP, co-owner Anita Ruderman greets yogis and yuginis (male and female yoga students, respectively), with a warm smile and words of encouragement. Thirty minutes earlier, she turned on the heat inside of the studio in preparation for her morning class.

"You need the perfect combination of temperature and humidity to conduct a hot yoga class," said Ruderman. The heat allows for deeper stretching and produces more sweat, which enables the body to release more toxins, she explained.

Although yoga is a 5,000-year-old practice, hot yoga is a fairly new phenomenon and hot yoga centers are very new to Brooklyn. While there are several different types of yoga involving various poses and postures, hot yoga follows a set series of 26 Hatha poses and two breathing exercises. The main difference between hot yoga and other practices is the heat.

"The heated room allows the body to become more flexible at a quicker rate," said Laura McCracken, owner of Every Breath You Take Hot Yoga, in Park Slope. After encouragement from his guru, Bishnu Ghosh, in Calcutta, India, Yogi Raj Bikram Choudhary, the founder of the worldwide Yoga College of India, brought yoga to Beverly Hills, Calif., in the mid-1970s. There he spent five years developing his own series of 26 classic postures with Western doctors. Slowly, the temperature rose and the series came to life.

"The system is designed to work every part of your body, so that it is a full-body workout," said Aiko Nakasone, co-owner of Bikram Yoga, in Brooklyn Heights.

The 26 poses work every muscle, joint, ligament and internal organ in the body. Each pose is performed in a specific order to fully open and strengthen the body. For example, pose 15 cannot reach its maximum extension without having already executed the first 14



poses. The flow of the poses creates a balance between the mind, body and soul.

Carrie Brownstein, 31, of Fort Greene, has been practicing hot yoga at HYP since Ruderman opened the studio in November 2002.

"I like hot yoga because it really loosens me up," said Brownstein. "It's also an amazing workout. I attended other yoga classes before coming here, but I left feeling like I still had to do some type of cardiovascular activity."

Hot yoga classes run for 90 minutes and cost between \$16 and \$18 for a single class. (Class cards are also available for discounted prices.) Temperatures usually range from 95 degrees to 105 degrees, but can reach as high as 110 degrees. Instructors coach students through each pose verbally, but never demonstrate the actual pose, because instructors must be able to monitor students' posture at all times.

Practicing hot yoga has many benefits including: muscle tone, weight and stress reduction, injury recovery, and an increase in flexibility and energy.

"As all of the organs work together, strengthening the immune system, hot yoga also reverses the aging process," said McCracken.

Although hot yoga does not cure chronic ailments such as diabetes or osteoporosis, it can help to relieve some of the symptoms, explained Troy Myers, co-owner of Bikram Yoga.

Pregnant women or people with high blood pressure should consult their doctor before practicing hot yoga. Also, yogis and yuginis should not eat anything for at least two hours prior to the class to avoid nausea.

For certification, Bikram — and some hot yoga — instructors attend Bikram's college in Beverly Hills.

"We went through an intense nine weeks of training with two classes per day; it was life-changing," said Nakasone, who attended the training with her husband and partner Myers. Besides daily classes, instructors attend lectures and learn the specific dialogue to use once certified.

While Bikram Yoga students practice on a carpeted floor, both Ruderman and McCracken have hardwood floors throughout their studios to eliminate odor. "Bikram likes carpeted rooms, not hardwood floors," Nakasone said. "It's a liability issue, we sweat a lot. We practice in a stinky room with smelly bodies to find actual peace and calm in all places. Finding calm is easy in the Himalayan Mountains, but try finding calm in New York City."

The best part about hot yoga is that all people, regardless of age, size, or fitness level, benefit from its practice. There are no set levels of ability. Every day is a new day.

"The beauty of hot yoga is that you could practice it for 30 years, and even though the series is the same, the practice is always different," said Ruderman.

But there's more to yoga than hot yoga, and other forms have health benefits, too.

"Any yoga practice is good for the body," noted Repose owner Jane Weintraub, whose Bay Ridge studio does not offer hot yoga classes. "At Repose, we concentrate on holistic well-being, body strength, flexibility, reducing stress and creating inner peace."

"The difference between hot yoga and other forms of yoga is that it is a specific 26 postures and two breathing exercises in a heated room," said Nakasone. "Other than that, all yoga is wonderful and works all aspects of the mind, spirit and body."

So grab a towel, comfortable and lightweight clothing, lots of water, and join the heat wave spreading throughout Brooklyn.

FITNESS SPECIAL

FITNESS

Bikram Yoga is located at 106 Montague St. between Henry and Hicks streets, second floor, in Brooklyn Heights. Single Bikram class: \$18. For more information call (718) 797-2100 or visit www.bikramyogabrooklyn.com.

Every Breath You Take Hot Yoga is located at 227 Seventh St. at Fifth Avenue, second floor, in Park Slope. Single hot yoga class: \$18. For more information, call (718) 237-2300 or visit www.everybreath.com.

Hot Yoga People is located at 659 Fulton St. between Flatland and Rockwell places, second floor, in Fort Greene. Single hot yoga class: \$16. For more information, call (718) 237-2300 or visit www.yogapeople.com.

Repose Yoga is located at 8325 Fifth Ave. at 64th Street, second floor, in Bay Ridge. For more information, call (718) 238-0174 or visit www.reposenyoga.com.

Feel the burn: (Top) Instructor Erin McGarry demonstrates the standing bow pose at Bikram Yoga. (Above) Hot Yoga People co-owner Anita Ruderman (foreground) leads a class in her Fort Greene studio.

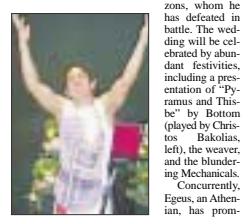
THEATER

'Summer lovin'

After Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night," Anton Chekhov's "The Bear" and Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest," Waterloo Bridge Theatre Company Artistic Director J. Brandon says he'll "keep the humor rolling" with Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

"The play is not just funny," Hill told GO Brooklyn, "it's also one of Shakespeare's happier plays. There's very little darkness."

As the comedy opens, Theseus, king of Athens, is about to marry Hippolyta, queen of the Amazons, whom he has defeated in battle. The wedding will be celebrated by abundant festivities, including a presentation of "Pyramus and Thisbe" by Bottom (played by Christos Bakolias, left), the weaver, and the blundering Mechanicals.



Concurrently, Egeus, an Athenian, has prompted his daughter Hermia to marry Demetrius, but she is in love with Lysander. But if Hermia does not care for Demetrius, her friend Helena is madly in love with him. Oberon, the fairy king who is feuding with his queen, Titania, decides to set things right, with the aid of his assistant Puck.

The company has made several original twists in this production.

"We're doing three things people will either like or dislike," says Hill. "We hope people will like them: Mustardseed, handmaiden to Titania, is also Hippolyta; Puck is also Theseus; and the Mechanicals have a love triangle — both Peter Quince and Tommasina Snout (now a woman) are in love with Nick Bottom."

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" will be performed in a newly renovated playhouse with more seats and a repositioned stage that allows for circular seating reminiscent of theaters in Elizabethan times like The Globe. The Rose and The Blackfriars.

"A Midsummer Night's Dream" continues through April 11, Thursdays through Saturdays at 8 pm, and Sundays at 3 pm. Tickets are \$15, \$10 students. The Waterloo Bridge Playhouse is located at 475 Third Ave. at 10th St. in Gowanus. For reservations, call (212) 502-0796 or visit www.waterloobridge4t.com. — Paulanne Simmons

BOOKS

Vegan guide

Rynn Berry is celebrating the 10th anniversary of the publication of her "The Vegan Guide to New York City" with a new edition.

In the 2004 edition, Berry, a Prospect Heights resident who serves as historical advisor to the North American Vegetarian Society, and co-authors Chris Abreu-Suzuki and Barry Litsky offer a treasure trove of culinary information for vegetarians, vegans and raw foods enthusiasts.

The book covers all of Manhattan's neighborhoods with chapters on restaurants, juice bars, the authors' favorite health food shops, greenmarkets, raw food resources and bookstores.

Bliss in Williamsburg and Prospect Heights' Green Paradise get thumbs up from the authors, too.

Under the chapter titled "Why Veganism?" Berry explains, "Vegetarians avoid meat because of the animal suffering, negative health effects, and environmental damage involved in 'eating carcasses,' as Leo Tolstoy put it. Vegans carry these reasons to their logical conclusions and avoid using all animal products, to the extent possible."

"The Vegan Guide to New York City," by Berry and Abreu-Suzuki with Litsky (Ethical Living, 2004) can be purchased at Barnes & Noble (267 Seventh Ave. at Sixth Street, (718) 832-9066), The Community Book Store (143 Seventh Ave. at Carroll Street, (718) 783-3075), and Back to the Land (142 Seventh Ave. at Carroll Street, (718) 768-5654) in Park Slope; and Perelandra (175 Remsen St. at Court Street, (718) 855-6068) in Brooklyn Heights. — Tina Barry

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Sunday, March 28, 2004, 3PM

Trio in B-flat, Op. 11 LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN
Trio DAVID T. LITTLE
commissioned by BFChM, first performance
Trio No. 1 in B Major, Op. 8 JOHANNES BRAHMS

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Dear Diary

A day-by-day account of my love affair with a new women-only fitness center

By Lisa J. Curtis
GO Brooklyn Editor

I, too, have wondered if there is an alternative to gyms filled with the sounds of clanging barbells, where the only staff you see on a regular basis are the ones emptying baskets of trash or towels, read this workout journal about a writer's first-hand experience at the Curves fitness and weight loss center for women.

March 10, 10:30 am

My first visit to the Curves gym on Court Street in Carroll Gardens. Loni Markman, 26, a certified personal trainer. She quizzed me on my reasons for wanting to workout and was encouraging. "If you workout three times a week, you will see a change," Markman assured.

One of the questions Markman asked me from the "figure analysis" form was, "What has been your heaviest weight?" (In my case, it's the weight I am now, and never to my mind.) After "When?" the options are: "After pregnancy." Ok that makes sense, but I'm childless. And "After Divorce." That's sad, and it also makes sense, but I'm happily married. But then there was "After Marriage." That's me! Who knew that when my husband was whirling me around the dance floor for the first time as man and wife a year and a half ago, that I would rapidly swell like a water balloon?

Well, apparently the people at Curves knew. Markman sweetly told me that she too had gained weight after

getting married. Although it's nice that I'm not alone, she's bounced back well, and I'm still all bounce and no tone. At certain ages, like 30, your metabolism slows down, explained Markman. The combination of variables apparently gave me a serious one-two punch — literally — in the gut.

In addition to explaining how Curves' circuit training works, Markman also explained that all of this sweat and hard work wouldn't pay off if I didn't eat right. Dr. Slim prescribed adding eight glasses of water a day to my diet; a warning to keep an eye on my portion sizes; and to avoid bleached flour, sugar and those other menacing simple carbohydrates.

My goals, which Markman assured were attainable, were to lose weight, diminish stress, sleep well and firm up my body — which would be eventually toned by Curves' hydraulic resistance machines.

Markman explained that the pricing policies depend on the ever-changing advertised promotions. (Without any discounts, there is a \$149 sign-up fee and \$49-a-month-plus-tax fee.)

I was so reeved up to start slimming down, that rather than make an appointment to come back for my first workout, I had a first workout on the spot. Markman explained how to maintain good form on each machine to get maximum results. Two-and-a-half times around the circuit of machines, alternating with recovery boards, is a 30-minute, full-body workout followed by stretching.

Markman gave me tips on the stretching, too, ending with a pose ly-



During the cool down, instructor Lauren Blase Miller demonstrates stretches for the author.



No danger, Curves ahead: Curves manager and personal trainer Loni Markman assists Judy Reyes in performing her workout on the recovery board. The "tree of success" wall mural behind them lists the names of clients and the inches and pounds they have lost.

ing on our backs on a mat, with our hands under our knees and hugging our legs to our chests.

"Here I tell people I like to close my eyes and give myself a little thank you," she said. "Thank you for doing something for you today."

I would have howled with laughter, but Markman was very sincere about the women being supportive of each other at Curves, and I wanted to fit in. (Although mostly I just wanted to fit comfortably into my pants again.)

The brilliance of the Curves workout is that you do as many repetitions, as fast as you can on each machine until a recording interrupts the pop music and tells you to change stations. Occasionally you are asked to step away from the station and check your heart rate. You are encouraged to do anything on the recovery boards — from marching in place to jogging in place to knee raises — to keep the heart rate up between machines.

I finished this strength training-aerobic workout, lightly sweating, thinking, "This is a piece of cake!" I went into the changing room, mopped up with a towel — there aren't any shower facilities at Curves — and was on my way.

For maximum results, I should do the workout three times a week, advised Markman, and to burn even more calories, try the aerobic workouts.

March 12, 7 pm

This time, I'm on my own, although a Curves trainer is on the floor advising us about when our form needs to be adjusted. (I kept forgetting to swing one arm at a time, instead of both arms at the same time, on a machine that works the biceps and triceps.)

Although she was no longer at my side, I soon recalled Markman's advice to scooch into the machines butt first, like sliding into a limo with a fancy dress on. But now that I had,

FITNESS

Curves is located at 455 Court St. between Fourth Place and Luger Street in Carroll Gardens, (718) 532-8777; and at 375 Ninth St. at Sixth Avenue in Park Slope, (718) 788-0003. On March 20, from 2 pm to 4 pm, the Carroll Gardens location will celebrate its first anniversary with a free open-house party for the entire family featuring face painting, balloons, food, raffles and aromatherapy.

for the most part, a handle on how the machines worked, I could concentrate on getting in as many reps as possible. Curves' hydraulic resistance machines don't have weight stacks to manage or change, which tend to slow down your workout and, frankly, make a lot of noise. I pulled and pushed at the machines' levers, listening for the "swoosh" sound that told me I was working hard enough.

Markman had explained that this resistance training builds muscles that will continue to burn fat, even between workouts. (But since muscle is heavier than fat, Curves prefers to measure weight loss by inches lost rather than pounds lost.)

The upbeat music fueled my frantic running on the boards, but the women around me were generally older and weren't moving as fast. Some women came with friends and chatted their way around. I felt like the kid in the class with ADD as dance moves from old Jane Fonda tapes came back to me and got my feet moving on the boards. I was encouraged, however, by the "tree of success" wall mural covered with leaves inscribed with the names of women and the amount of inches and pounds they had lost.

As I left, a Curves employee drew attention to her new client and said, "Hey everybody, another first workout!" The room of sweating women

responded with congratulations and applause.

On this visit, I had an even better, sweeter workout than my first.

March 13

Feeling a bit of tightness in the muscles today. Will workout tomorrow instead.

March 14

Oops! Curves is closed on Sundays. Did crunches and pushups at home to make up for missed workout.

March 15, 7:15 pm

On Monday and Wednesday nights, between 6 pm and 8 pm, Curves has a power workout. On this night, there was excitement in the air among the women of all ages in attendance.

Because the usual instructor was out, Markman led the ladies through the tough, power workout from the center of the room. (Although we were free to not take part and do our own thing.)

In between reps on the machines, Markman had us raising our knees to our opposite elbows, raising our legs behind us, doing a tricky box step, running fast, boxing and more on the boards.

A cheerful, young Curves trainer pointed out a couple more of my missteps with the machines, and Markman sang out encouragement. "You can do better than that! Give me another one, C'mon!"

The trainers are like your sisters, but without mood swings!

On my way to the changing room, I noticed a sign over the scale that said that if a client comes to the club three times a week, she gets Curves dollars good for various Curves products. A workout that incorporates shopping! This really is a club for women!

Tonight the sweat was pouring down my face, and the machines were much easier to use as I am quickly getting the hang of 'em. Best workout yet!

March 16, 8:15 pm

Despite the blizzard-like conditions, 15 women, including myself, came to Curves to experience the monthly "Viva La Diva" workout, brought back by popular demand, which is led by the impressively funny Kate Billingsley. After we moved the boards and machines to the periphery of the room, we took our places on the carpeted floor for a strictly aerobic workout.

Billingsley knew many of the women working out by first name, and with lots of humor and a great soundtrack including Elvis ("Ladies, I've seen some of you on the boards and this is for you: 'A little less conversation, and a little more action!').

In addition to the traditional warm-up moves and stretches from the Curves diagrams, Billingsley, still wearing her knitted, winter cap, demonstrated her original, light-hearted routines to get the surprisingly resistant hecklers ("AGAIN with the floor!!," one whined), to move their bodies.

When we weren't sliding to the left and right doing the "spank that butt" and "hail that taxi," we were sashaying down the runway like divas.

Billingsley wrapped up with an intense round of abdominal exercises alternating with pushups, all the while, keeping us laughing.

"Kate, you crack me up!" called out a young woman.

Billingsley, who has worked at Curves since May, tells me, "This is the best job I ever had." So far, this is the best club I've ever worked out in.

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Another recent improvement to the facility is a new childcare center, which has been moved to a convenient spot downstairs, run by two experienced caregivers. The

Park Slope Sports Club is located at 330 Flatbush Ave., between Sterling Place and Park Place. For membership information, call (718) 783-5152.



Spin doctor: (Top left) Jackie Peters, spin instructor Michelle Aluqdah (center) and Jean Kaminsky cool down after an early morning class. (Above) Master trainer Jean Marc Alcindor customizes a workout for Chantel Thompson.

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And after all that exercise, what could be more relaxing than a chair massage or a full-body Swedish or deep-muscle massage in Park Slope Athletic Club's massage room, or perhaps a stay in the dry sauna, located in the large locker rooms? (Massages require an extra fee and are offered by appointment only.)

The club is conveniently located near many subway lines (2, 3, Q and B), which means 9-to-5ers can stop here for a workout before or after work. And the club is continuing to expand with plans to open a second location in Fort Greene by year's end.

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Personal touch

Working out with a trainer makes it easier to commit to a healthy routine at the gym

By Vince DiMiceli
The Brooklyn Papers

It's not getting to the gym, it's getting back to the gym.

That's the difficulty I've always faced in my feeble attempts to workout on a regular basis. The test I put myself through is always simple: workout every Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning for one hour without fail. The problem is, I never pass.

"That's called the all-or-nothing mentality, and it's typical," said Jason Bravo, my personal trainer for the week courtesy of Eastern Athletic.

"Monday always hurts, so you try to find a way out of it. So you say to yourself, 'I'll do it on Tuesday,' but you can't, because Tuesday is all booked already. So then you figure you'll do it Wednesday, but do it twice as hard to make up for the lost time on Monday."

"But that just makes you afraid to go to the gym Wednesday, because you know it's going to hurt," said Bravo, a 26-year-old in tip-top condition. "So you put it off and put it off until finally you're sleeping. Thursday comes, and you figure it's too late in the week to start now, I'll start fresh on Monday."

In short, an endless cycle of no workouts, and your gym dues down the toilet.

So how do you defeat it? "You have to have an 'all or nothing' mentality," Bravo, the corporate director of sports conditioning (or head personal trainer) at Eastern Athletic, told me. "You have to have a realistic routine that backs off the two-hour commitment. You need something you can do consistently, everyday. When you set up a gameplan you can win, you'll have positive results."

Last Tuesday, Bravo and I attempted to set up my game plan.



Coach Bravo: Personal trainer Jason Bravo (right) helps the author maintain proper form as he progresses through the free weight portion of his workout.

But first, we had to look at the cold, hard facts. Apparently, and unbeknownst to me, sitting at a desk all day and staring at a computer screen is not considered sufficient exercise — even if you type a couple of stories in the process.

Seven years of this sedentary lifestyle ends up taking its toll — even after cutting out the soda and candy. So let's just say I wasn't in the best shape of my life. "No problem," said Bravo, "we'll start you slow and get you eating right."

My first workout — on Tuesday morning at 8 a.m. inside Eastern's gym at the Brooklyn Marriott — went

quickly, six minutes on the treadmill at six miles per hour, followed by back-to-back crunches and pushups.

"We want to keep your heart rate up," Bravo would

off between my legs and back again, rather quickly, to keep the heart pumping while working separate muscles.

Through it all, Bravo kept giving me hints on how to do the exercises properly while never telling me exactly how many reps I had to do. This was a big revelation for me — I never knew when the last push (or pull) was coming, until he said, "OK, that's enough." I guess it's easier to finish your reps when you can't see the finish line.

On the second day of my journey to physical fitness, Bravo had me sit down with Eastern's head nutritionist, Cara Hogue. Hogue — a practitioner of the Zone diet — stressed the importance of eating three square meals a day as well as at least 64 ounces of water. She also recommended: I never go five hours without eat-

ing a meal; I limit or eliminate caffeine from my drinks; I cut out every juice and soft drink; and I ingest 1,500 milligrams of fish oil supplements per day (which contain elusive Omega-3s), as I never eat fish.

Beyond keeping me healthy, Bravo added that by sticking to the diet, I would keep the idea of staying fit in mind all day. This would help me look forward to my trip to the gym the following day.

Of course, help like this doesn't come for free. A sit down with a nutritionist costs \$150 for Eastern members and \$175 for non-members, while prices for personal trainers range from \$52.50 to \$125 per session.

As the days wore on (I met with Bravo every weekday except Friday), instead of dreading my workout — which is what normally happens when I go to a gym — I began to look forward to it. And even one weekend, when we didn't meet, I did my pushup and crunch routine that Bravo ordered me to do every day. "You have to do something," he told me. "Even if it's just pushups. Working out isn't a three-day a week thing. It's something you have to do every day."

What I realized during the course of the week was just how important a personal trainer had become to my workout. Bravo did all the things I would never have figured out on my own — including what machines I should use, how much weight should be used, how many reps I should do, and when I should go get a drink of water.

After our week was up, Bravo recommended a 35- to 40-minute workout at the gym four times a week, preferably on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. On the other days, I should just do my 10- to 15-minute home routine.

And my reward, after my last workout (besides feeling great about myself) was a massage at Eastern's Shibusumi Spa, located in its Clark Street location. There, massage therapist Becca Nichols wrung the ache out of every sore muscle I had, for a full hour. The next day, my body felt better than ever.

If that doesn't get me back to the gym again, nothing will.

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191 15th St. at Fifth Avenue in Park Slope, (718) 965-6200. Mon.-Fri., 5 am to midnight; weekends, 7 am to 9 p.m. 9215 Fourth Ave. at 92nd Street in Bay Ridge, (718) 238-9400. Open 24 hours.

OF NOTE: "Salsa Groove," a one-hour workout to salsa music with dance moves; "On the Ball," a one-hour resistance ball workout to music. Classes available at both clubs.

Eastern Athletic Clubs

17 Eastern Parkway at Grand Army Plaza, in Prospect Heights, (718) 789-4600. Mon.-Thurs., 6:30 am to 10 pm; Friday, 6:30 am to 5 pm; weekends, 9 am to 7 pm. OF NOTE: Half-court basketball and Junior Program (basketball and swimming classes for kids). Register on Monday, March 22, for Junior Program.

43 Clark St. at Hicks Street, in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 625-0500. Mon.-Fri., 6:30 am to 11 pm; weekends, 9 am to 7 pm.

OF NOTE: Pilates Studio and Junior Program sports classes (swimming, dance, tennis, squash, martial arts, bas-

ketball, rollerblading and more) for kids ages 8 months to early teen. Registration is mandatory for Junior Program.

Park Slope Sports Club

330 Flatbush Ave. at Sterling Place, in Park Slope, (718) 783-5152. Mon.-Thurs., 5:30 am to 11 pm; Friday, 5:30 am to 7 pm; weekends, 7 am to 7 pm. OF NOTE: Johnny G Spin class featuring one hour with Ron and his great techno music, and Pilates Studio, with both mat and IMX machines.

Advertiser Focus

Body Elite

348 Court St. at Union Street, in Carroll Gardens, (718) 935-0088. Mon.-Thurs., 5:30 am to 11 pm; Friday, 5:30 am to 10 pm; weekends, 8 am to 8 pm. OF NOTE: New tanning annex, featuring Mystic Tan, UV-free tanning machines.

Inches A Weigh

9712 Third Ave. at 97th Street, in Bay Ridge, (718) 745-0464. Mon.-Thurs., 8:30 am to 8 pm; Saturday, 8:30 am to 6 pm; Sunday, 9 am to 1 pm.

Havana nights: Instructor Silvana Maloney leads students through the popular Salsa Groove aerobics class at Harbor Fitness in Bay Ridge on Wednesday night.

OF NOTE: On-site exercise and one-on-one nutritional counseling for women only.

Curves for Women

375 Ninth St. at Sixth Avenue, in Park Slope, (718) 788-0003. Mon.-Fri., 7 am to 9 pm (closed between 1 pm and 3 pm on M, W, F); Saturday, 8 am to 5 pm. 445 Court St. at Fourth Place, in Carroll Gardens, (718) 852-8777. Mon.-Fri., 7 am to 9 pm (closed between 1:30 pm and 3 pm on M, W, F); Saturday, 8 am to 5 pm.

OF NOTE: First Anniversary Party Saturday, March 20, 2-4 pm, with clown, face painter, raffish, cake. Free and open to all.

Repose Yoga

8325 Fifth Ave. at 83rd Street, in Bay Ridge, (718) 238-0174. Visit www.repose-yoga.com for class schedule.

For Healthy Eating

Veggie Delight Natural Foods

11 Flatbush Ave. at Fulton Street, in Downtown Brooklyn, (718) 624-6290. Open daily. OF NOTE: Herbalist and nutritionist on site; juice bar plus all organic, home-cooked vegetarian breakfast, lunch and dinner. Items for take-out; bulk herbs, vitamins; organic produce and grocery items; natural beauty products; books and magazines.

For Weight Loss

Diet Center

189 Montague St. at Clinton Street, Suite 508, in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 522-0189. By appointment only. OF NOTE: 21-day, low-carb weight loss plan.

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Where to

Compiled by Susan Rosenthal

SAT, MARCH 20

OUTDOORS AND TOURS

PARK SLOPE TOUR: Big Open Walking tour takes a hike around this neighborhood. Stops include The Mottola Club, Litchfield Manor and more. \$12. \$10 students and seniors. 1 pm. Meet at southwest corner of St. John's Place and Plaza Street. (718) 459-1010.

WALKING TOUR: Learn about downtown Brooklyn during a tour led by Marjorie Lawrence. Stops: 2 pm to 5 pm. Meet at New Market Brooklyn, 333 Adams St. (718) 789-0430.

PERFORMANCE

CONCERT: First Evangelical Free Church presents Nancy Latta and family in concert. \$5 donation. 6:30 pm. Sixth Avenue and 46th Street. (718) 745-7775.

BAM: Brooklyn Academy of Music presents Edward Hall and Propeller, his all-male company. In Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream." \$40, \$40, \$25. 7:30 pm. BAM Henry Street Theater, 51 Fulton St. (718) 636-4100.

HEIGHTS PLAYERS: presents "Enter Laughing." \$12, \$10, \$10 students. 7:30 pm. Willow Park. (718) 237-7525.

THEATER NODUS: Brooklyn Heights presents an evening of performances by emerging talent. \$10. \$5 students. 8 pm. 302 Rockwell Place. (718) 455-7882.

BROOKLYN ARTS EXCHANGE: presents Alexis Caputo in "Beats 1 Live in America." \$15, \$15, \$10 students. 8 pm. 421 Ave. C. (718) 822-0003.

WATERLOO THEATER: Waterloo Bridge Theater Company presents Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream." \$15. \$10 students. 8 pm. 415 Third Ave. (718) 552-0766.

THEATER: Goldenfield High School on Kingsborough College's Campus Queens. "A Streetcar Named Desire." by Tennessee Williams. \$12. 8 pm. End of Oriental Boulevard. (718) 368-8500.

SIMON AND JUDE PLAYERS: presents the musical comedy "La Cage Aux Folles." \$15, \$12 seniors and children. 8 pm. Simon and Jude Church, 51st and Lake Street. (718) 518-3008.

THE JAZZ: Second annual Lady Got Chop Women's Jazz Festival. Soprano Jazz String Quartet performs. \$16. 7 pm. 375 Kosciuszko St. (718) 385-7825.

PETE'S CANDY STORE: presents The Caribbeens. 9 pm. 709 Lorimer St. (718) 302-3770.

BAM CAFE: presents music with Karen Gibson Rock. \$10 food drink minimum. 9 pm. 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 636-4100.

PARLOR JAZZ: presents "The Night" concert with vocalists Nicole Antek and her Trio. \$15. \$10 students. 8 pm. 115 1st Ave. (718) 552-0766.

COMEDY: at the Brooklyn Brew-Haus. \$5 admission and two-drink minimum. 9:30 pm. 273 23rd St. (718) 424-8878.

BLUES: Waterfront Ale House presents The Black Coffee Blue Band. No cover. 155 Atlantic Ave. Call for time. (718) 522-3794.

CHILDREN

FAMILY MOVIE: Brooklyn Public Library, Central branch, presents Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. (718) 11 am. Grand Army Plaza. (718) 230-2100.

PUPPET SHOW: Flying Broom Community Arts presents "Star Stories," storytelling with puppets. Appropriate for ages 2 to 5. \$5. 3:30 children. 11 am and 1 pm. Cobble Hill Playgroup. 134 Union St. (718) 596-4784.

LEARNING: "Jack and the Beanstalk." \$6 kids, \$7 adults, ages 4 and older. 12:30 pm. 338 58th St. (718) 965-3391.

ARTY FACTS: Brooklyn Museum of Art invites kids to "Material." \$6 adults, free for members and children ages 12 and under. 11 am and 2 pm. 200 Eastern Parkway. (718) 638-5000.

OTHER

SALE: at Christ Church of Bay Ridge. Jewelry, housewares, books, clothing and more. 10 am to 3 pm. 7301 Ridge Blvd. (718) 745-5478.

BARNES AND NOBLE: Welcome.

spring with Lisa Campbell Ernst. She reads from her book "Wake Up, It's Spring." Barnes and Noble, 106 Court St. Call for time. (718) 246-4158.

FILM: Brooklyn Museum of Art presents "Creature from the Black Lagoon" (1952). \$6, 1 pm and 4 pm. Recommended for ages 8 and up. 200 Eastern Parkway. (718) 638-5000.

WORKSHOP: Brooklyn Botanic Garden hosts an eight-week class on Chinese brush painting. 3 pm to 5 pm. 1000 Washington Ave. Call for time. (718) 627-7220.

PAINTING: Brooklyn Botanic Garden hosts an eight-week class on Chinese brush painting. 3 pm to 5 pm. 1000 Washington Ave. Call for time. (718) 627-7220.

MYSTERY READING: Study Reads reads from her book "Weeping." 5 pm to 6:30 pm. A Novel Idea Bookstore, 415 Third Ave. (718) 636-4100.

RECEPTIONS: "The Five Outer Planets" by artist Robert Taylor. 6 pm. 1000 Washington Ave. (718) 627-7220.

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SALE: at Christ Church of Bay Ridge. Jewelry, housewares, books, clothing and more. 10 am to 3 pm. 7301 Ridge Blvd. (718) 745-5478.

BARNES AND NOBLE: Welcome.

Waterloo Theater. "A Midsummer Night's Dream." 3 pm. See Sat, March 20.

CHILDREN

DANCE: White Waves Dance offers a modern dance technique class for 6 to 9 year olds. \$20. 1 pm and 4 pm. 25 Jay St. Call for time. (718) 626-8500.

SEA STORIES: NY Aquarium presents storyteller LuAnn Adams. She presents marine tales and also sings. 3 to 7, 5:11, 7:30 and 9:11. 120 and under and seniors. 1 pm, 1:30 and 3:30 pm. 1000 Washington Ave. Call for time. (718) 627-7220.

BOTANIC GARDEN: Kids are invited to make a Japanese garden in a dish. Kids are invited to choose from water, stones and plants and design a garden in a dish. \$3. 1 pm to 3 pm. 1000 Washington Ave. (718) 627-7220.

PUPPETWORKS: "Jack and the Beanstalk." 12:30 pm and 2:30 pm. See Sat, March 20.

OTHER

DINNER FASHION SHOW: hosted by St. Finbar. 5:30 pm to 4 pm. Rex Manor, 40th Street and 15th Ave. (718) 266-0283.

FILM SERIES: "The Honor of Men." History Month, Brooklyn Public Library, Central branch, presents "The Five Outer Planets" by artist Robert Taylor. 6 pm. 1000 Washington Ave. (718) 627-7220.

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BARNES AND NOBLE: Welcome.

Ocean Ave. (718) 376-8164.

DIABETES DAY: New York Methodist Hospital offers glucose tests, blood pressure and dental screenings. Also, a pharmacological and nutritional counseling. 9 am to 3 pm. 263 Seventh Ave. (718) 760-5657.

LINE DANCING: at Jubilee Senior Center. 1 pm. 55 Pierpont St. (718) 682-2142.

DEDICATION CEREMONY: Prospects for dedication ceremony at Hill Hook Community Photographers' Exhibit celebrating the diversity of our community. Marty Markowitz, Brooklyn President, presides. 2:30 pm. Park House, 2nd floor, 2nd City Park at Pioneer Street. (717) 690-3713.

CHILDREN'S RESOURCE FAIR: Parents of children with special needs are invited to attend a resource fair. 4 pm to 6 pm. Brooklyn Public Library, Business Branch, 280 Cadman Place West. (718) 623-7100.

BAMCINETEAT: presents Bloody Hell and British horror films. Today: "The Creeping Fear" (1973). \$10, 4:30 pm, 6:30 pm and 9:10 pm. 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 636-4100.

MEDITATION: On-going group of sittings. Dogan-basis. 1 pm to 3 pm. 366 First St. (718) 627-7220.

BARBES BAR: presents music with William Charles MacDiarmid. 9 pm. 376 Ninth St. Call for ticket info. (718) 665-9177.

BAM CAFE: presents music with Ursula Singer. 9 pm. 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 636-4100.

HEATED DISCUSSION: Author and free investigator Shelly Reuben will give a talk at the book launch party for her new novel, "Weeping." at A Novel Idea Bookstore, 415 Third Ave. at 84th Street in Bay Ridge, on March 20 from 5 to 6:30 pm.

GALAPAGOS: presents composer Amy Knick in the reviewed. \$7. 8 pm. 70 North 30th St. (718) 785-5188.

BARBES BAR: Night of the Ravens. \$7. 8 pm. 376 Ninth St. Call for ticket info. (718) 665-9177.

FREDDY'S BACKROOM: The Bitter Post. No cover. 9:30 pm. 485 Dean St. (718) 622-7035.

BAMCINETEAT: presents Bloody Hell and British horror films. Today: "The Creeping Fear" (1973). \$10, 4:30 pm, 6:30 pm and 9:10 pm. 30 Lafayette Ave. (718) 636-4100.

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Ortiz: Breathalyzers for drivers

By Michael Gormley
Associated Press

The lawmaker who brought New York the nation's first ban on handheld cell phones while driving now wants every driver in the state to pass a Breathalyzer test for alcohol before getting behind the wheel.

Even staunch anti-drunk driving advocates, though, say there is little likelihood the measure will pass.

Assemblyman Felix Ortiz, of Sunset Park and Red Hook, said the "ignition interlock" device would require a driver to breathe out hard for five seconds while humming "do-o-o" to start the car. After three failures, the car won't start for 15 minutes.

While driving, the test will be required every 20 to 40 minutes, with five minutes' warning to pull over if the driver prefers. Failing or ignoring the test won't stop the car, but the horn will

sound repeatedly. Drivers would also have to report every month or so to a service center.

The cost of the under-the-dashboard devices is \$800 to \$1,000 installed. Ortiz would like to see the devices in all cars starting in 2006.

Forty-four states, including New York, require the devices in at least some convicted drunken drivers' vehicles and often require it for repeat offenders, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

No state requires the devices for all drivers and a New Mexico bill similar to Ortiz' died in February.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving thinks mandating the device for all drivers goes too far — at least for now.

"We know that they work for convicted drunk drivers and that's what our position is," said Wendy Hamilton, national MADD president. "We see no research that tells us this would be effective and we don't think the world is ready for this at this time. Perhaps in the future — but that's pretty far down the road at this time."

The Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers opposes the bill because of weaknesses in Breathalyzer technology. For example, a sober passenger could breathe into the device in a drunken driver's place. Manufacturers are working on devices that "recognize" the driver.

The group also opposes a "broad-brush" approach. "You're asking a large portion of the population to basically have to have this technology because of something a very small percentage of the population is doing," said Charles Territo of the manufacturers' group.

Ortiz, however, said dramatic action is needed. "The gloves need to come off in this fight," the Democrat said.

Ortiz said New York motorists would

end up saving money because of fewer drinking-related accidents and deaths.

"Most people would probably think of a device like this as an inconvenience ... almost ludicrous," said Randy Haack. His son, Christopher, died in 2002 when he was a passenger in a fatal drunken driving crash.

"It's not a right to drive a car while intoxicated," Haack said in an emotional statement. "That's a right to kill, a license to go out and maim — I have a son, or had a son — that ceases to exist."

The debate in New Mexico and now in New York is paving the road for the use of the devices as technology improves and the cost drops, said New Mexico Sen. Kent Cravens, a Republican who sponsored the measure there.

"We can develop technology where it's passive, almost invisible ... we're not that far off," Cravens said. "It seems like an overreach, but that's what they said about seat belts and air bags, too."



The Brooklyn Papers / Tim O'Neil

March madness

Somehow, the fact that these dogs seem frozen in mid-air is less amazing than the snow that fell Tuesday, four days before the start of spring. The dogs, by the way, are not real, but a sculpture on the Metrotech commons.

CHEAP EATS...

Continued from page 1
Brooklyn for years because of our restaurants."

Pensins plates of pork filet Wellington from Court Street's Marco Polo Ristorante, mini-hamburgers from Union Street's Schnak and sushi from Blue Ribbon Sushi on Fifth Avenue. Markowitz couldn't resist biting into a jumbo-sized chocolate devil's food cupcake made lovingly by Fran Sippel

of Downtown Atlantic, in Boerum Hill. Chris Sippel, Fran's cousin and general manager of the restaurant at 364 Atlantic Ave., said the borough president had asked that he stow away one of the 24 cupcakes, which he correctly presumed would disappear soon after their unveiling.

"Marty came over to us right away and asked us to save him one," Chris Sippel

said of the cupcakes.

Conspicuously missing from the lineup are the 118-year-old Peter Luger Steak House in Williamsburg and the River Cafe at Fulton Ferry Landing, whose dinner menus nearly quadruple the \$18 prix fixe.

"We can't offer it at this time due to the high cost of our ingredients," said Scott Stamford, a manager at River Cafe. Joe Chirico, who last

month closed his historic Gage & Toller restaurant in Downtown Brooklyn, stopped by the unveiling at Borough Hall on Thursday to show off a few entrees from Marco Polo, his Italian fine dining establishment in Carroll Gardens. "Anything to promote Brooklyn," said Chirico, who displayed a mango, chicken and spinach entree for reporters. In contrast to Manhattan's event, which charges a fee to

participating restaurants, all of the eateries in Brooklyn were allowed to participate for free, said Markowitz spokeswoman Sharon Toomer.

Toomer urged diners to call ahead for reservations, but she didn't know whether restaurants would be accepting them this far in advance.

For a full list of participating restaurants, log onto www.BrooklynPapers.com and click on the GO Brooklyn link.

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